

the present time—and whatever it is really worth let that to pass. Those who are now paid in sterling receive the money in dollars at 4s. 4d. and of course they dispose of these in the market for whatever they will bring. If we fix the proportions fairly, and establish them by law, there can be no difficulty. If I thought that by any means mode, or perversion of the mode of conversion, the learned member wished or intended to pay these officers more, I should vote against him—but that cannot be the case. The Bill will no doubt carefully provide that justice shall be done to all parties. I will appeal to all who hear me and ask, if we do adopt the proposition formerly made by the Master of the Rolls, and make the £100 Sterling equal to £125 Currency, could there be any injustice, if we paid officers in the one instead of the other? I will proceed no further than in rating the British Coins—I would neither fix the dollar—nor the doubloon—let them fluctuate according to the demand. If we can fix the British Coins by a decided majority there can be no difficulty. In opposing the Resolution, with a view to bring back old Halifax Currency, Gentlemen will be acting as wisely as if they attempted to build a stately fabric on the moveable surface of a lake. The first breeze that ruffles the waters, disturbs that on which the building is to rest—and to erect a permanent structure on such an unsubstantial foundation, would be the extreme of madness. So if we base our currency upon a thing which is in itself unstable, we shall be subject to eternal fluctuations. As we have no mint and no coinage of our own, let us adopt the standard fixed by our Mother Country, and for which her interest and her honour are pledged to mankind.

27th. Mr. BELL presented a Petition from the town of Halifax, *numerously signed*, praying that British sterling be adopted as the basis of our currency, when a debate commenced which dragged its slow length through this and the following day. All the topics urged on Monday were gone over again and again. We do not think it necessary to report this discussion—*as but little was said that was new*, and a great deal that was sufficiently tiresome; we shall content ourselves with giving an abstract of the arguments used by the two contending parties. The Resolutions at first went to fix the payment of past obligations at 15 British shillings for the pound currency. To this it was objected, that creditors who had lent their money in doubloons—or had sold their property, expecting to be paid in that coin, which had for fifteen years formed the basis of our currency, would be subjected to a heavy loss. The answer given was, that in reality no loss would be suffered, because, though doubloons, being bought and sold as bullion in other countries, fluctuated in price, the amount of pure gold in sovereigns rated at 25s. and doubloons at £1 Halifax currency, was so nearly equal, that in reality the debtor would pay and the creditor receive a fair equivalent, whether the debt was discharged in the one or the other. That 50 sovereigns containing 904 3/4—100 grains of pure gold, and 25 doubloons 901 25—the creditor would in reality get a trifle more, if paid in sovereigns, or the silver which would buy them at the mint, than if he were paid in doubloons—a difference however, so slight, as to throw no serious difficulty in the way of such an adjustment. But then it was urged by Messrs. Lawson, Umacke, and Deblow, that the sovereigns and the British coins could not be had—that it was true, shillings and pence had flowed in here during the last few years, in consequence of their being rated above their value; but as the balance of trade was so largely against us with England, the moment British coins became relatively rated, they would all fly off, and leave us with nothing in which debts could be legally paid. To this it was answered, that the same arguments had been formerly used to prevent the country coming to cash payments; it being then said, that we could not supply ourselves with any coin at all, or conduct our business but in paper redeemable in nothing. That the labour of every country was equal to supply it with all the money necessary to carry on its business—and of the particular coins which by law were made the standard of value and money of account. That we had no mines—no mint—and yet coins of every nation were found here. Of course we could only procure these by sending abroad the products of our labour as an equivalent; and that the labour which brought us the dollar and the doubloon, would bring us, in quantities equal to our wants, the sovereign, the crown and the shilling. But, said the other side, British money is of more value here than it is in England, because the Commodity requires £101, 10s for a Bill on England of £100. Of course was the reply, the cost of transportation must be paid by any country wanting coins, from every other country from which they are to be brought. The Spanish Dollar—the Columbian Doubloon—even the American Eagle, which has to cross the Bay of Fundy, is burthened with this expense; but what does that prove?

To obviate the objection about subjecting the Creditor to loss, by compelling him to receive payment in British coins, the friends of the resolutions agreed to give to all creditors, for one year, the option of demanding the doubloon at £4. An outcry was raised against this. It would give the creditor a great advantage—it would stimulate every man having a debt owing to him to collect it within 12 months, in order that he might make a profit by selling his doubloons in a foreign market; and it would oblige those who had contracted obligations in British money at 25s. to pay in what could not be had but at a very heavy premium. To this it was replied, that we had now but a choice of paths out of the dangerous position in which past blunders had placed us—that each had its difficulties and objections, but that we must choose, and that which presented the least ought to be taken. That in the arrangement of a question so complicated, a trifling injustice might be done to some class of persons, but that, as in all such cases, the few must give way to the paramount objects of the safety and security of the many. That no great injustice could be done to either debtor or creditor, so long as precisely the same amount of the precious metals was made the medium of settlement between them. The opposition, when asked what remedy they would apply, stated their desire to go back to the old Halifax currency—which was the currency of all the surrounding Colonies and of the United States, &c. and which would simplify our operations with them, and obviate the difficulty about the scarcity of coins. To this it was objected, that old Halifax currency would be 15 British shillings to the pound—so that all the debts contracted by the community to the Banks in British shillings at 16 to the pound currency, would have to be discharged by 18, thus giving them an advantage over those who owed them of £10 on every £100. That this was a proposition, a thousand times more monstrous than either the loss they proposed to inflict on the creditor, by paying him in British coins, or the risk they were willing to subject the debtor to of paying in doubloons. Finally the Resolutions were carried by a majority of five, and a Committee appointed to prepare a Bill.

30th. The British Sterling Bill having been read a second time, Mr. Uniacke moved that it be deferred to that day three months; and after a good deal of discussion, the Motion was carried and the Bill lost—the names standing:

For the motion: Messrs G. Smith, Rudolf, Lawson, W. H. Roach, Budd, Delap, Johnston, Morse, Clements, Cochran, Umacke, Deblow, Dodd, Lent, Homer, Harris, Crow.

Against the motion: Messrs C. Roche, O'Brien, Croighton, Wier, Archibald, Lovett, Bell, Stewart, Morton, Huntingdon, Oxley, Dickson, Doyle, Chipman, Young.

And thus, as the Speaker expressed it; the House were "as you were."

County of Annapolis.

In our last, we noticed that the Petition from the County of Annapolis, to the King against the Bill for dividing Halifax County, was sent down to the House on Tuesday the 21th ult. on which occasion Mr Smith and others denounced the conduct of the Petitioners as highly insulting to the House. It was made the order of the day for Friday the 29th, to take this subject into consideration.

It being the order of the day to-day to consider the Governor's Message, and the Petition from Annapolis County on the subject of the division of the County of Halifax, these papers were taken up and read, and a motion made to refer them to a select Committee. Messrs. Smith, Uniacke, Lawson, and Doyle, declaimed against the petitioners, and the people at the Colonial Office, for listening to them. Mr. Doyle was anxious that the false and groundless charges made in the petition, against the House generally and himself and his Colleagues from Cape Breton in particular, should be answered, and shown to be without the shadow of a foundation. The Petitioners had made it matter of complaint against the Assembly that they had been defrauded of their rights, inasmuch as the Township of Wilmot had not been allowed a member, according to the provisions of the old statute bearing on the representation. But as well might the Township of Chester, Louisburg, Canseau and others complain, for they were all included in the same clause. But if there was blame any where, it lay with the Executive for not acting upon that statute, not with the Legislature for passing a new law which did not affect their rights in the slightest degree; and certainly did not deprive them of any which the old statute conferred. As a proof of the injurious tendency of a preponderance of Eastern members, it was stated that cordage, grappels, &c. which they use, in ship building,

had been burthened with heavy duties—now the fact was, that himself and his colleagues, and other gentlemen representing the Eastern Counties, had voted against these impositions, and used all their influence to defeat them; while they were opposed in their efforts by many of the western members, aided and abetted by some from this very County of Annapolis. He did not think that it comported with the dignity of the House to entertain the subject at all—neither the message nor the petition should have been permitted to lie on the Table at all—but as they had been read, and an order of the day made for taking them up, he was anxious that an answer should be given to the slanders the latter contained. Messrs. Stewart, Young, Wilkins, and others concurred in the opinion that the petition was unworthy of notice, and that it was beneath the dignity of the House to enter into any explanation of their conduct—or any defence of a bill which had received the deliberate sanction of the three branches. The Petitioners, who had failed to address either branch during the passage of the Bill, had been guilty of a gross insult to the combined Legislature, by attempting to defeat a useful measure by making false and improper statements to His Majesty's ministers. On the other side it was urged, that they had the right to petition—that the Annapolis Bill having been deferred, they conceived it to be their only chance for obtaining justice; and that if the subject was to be referred to a Committee, the Petitioners ought to have an opportunity of making their defence. Mr. Huntingdon thought the people of Bridgetown had as good a right to abuse the House as any body else; and in no quarter did they get more than in the County of Halifax. It having been urged as a complaint against the Petitioners, that they referred to a pledge made by the House, when passing the Bill, that it would divide the County of Annapolis, Mr. Johnson explained that they meant nothing more than that there was a moral pledge held out in the act itself that justice would be done to the other counties. Mr. Wilkins said he had taken some pains to ascertain the mode of dealing with Bills at home; and found that while they were all referred to a competent legal authority, the King's assent was only withheld from one of three causes: 1st—If they contained any thing at variance with the Royal instructions. 2d—If repugnant to the Common or Statute Law; and, 3d—If expressed in terms so defective as to be insufficient to carry out their obvious aim and intention. But that a Bill should be delayed because it did not refer to and provide for some different and distinct object, altogether unconnected with the design of it, was entirely unprecedented. It having been determined to refer the subject to a select Committee, Mr. Stewart was named as the chairman, but begged to be excused. Messrs. Croighton, Doyle, Young and others were then named, but all declined, and it being found difficult to obtain a committee, a motion was about to be put to discuss it in committee of the whole. Mr. Uniacke protested against this course, as it would in effect be compelling the majority, who had already determined upon a reference to a select committee, to submit to the minority who had voted against them. The Speaker interposed, and finally Mr. Uniacke and two other Gentlemen were appointed.

Division of Shelburne County.

A Bill had been introduced by Mr. Huntingdon for Dividing this County, and increasing its Representation, and was read a second time on Thursday 26th January.—The usual motion was made for committing the Bill to a Committee of the whole house, when Mr. Lawson moved as an amendment that the Bill be dismissed; after some discussion a division took place upon the amendment, which was lost; when the original motion for committing the Bill was put and carried, 16 to 13. On Monday 1st February, the House in Committee on this Bill, Resolved, 16 to 13, that the further consideration of the Bill be deferred to that day three months.

The Fisheries.

Wednesday, 27th—A Bill having been introduced by Mr. Umacke for the protection of the Fisheries, it was this day read a first time, when the Speaker called the attention of the House to the provisions of the Convention made between His Majesty and the United States, on 20th Oct. 1818, when the following discussion took place.

Mr. UNIACKE referred to a case argued by the Solicitor General in our Courts, who contended for an American Vessel caught within the line, that we had not the power to protect our Fisheries under the Convention and the English Statute. The point was